

Miscellaneous.

ESSAY.

How Far is a Methodist Preacher Justified in Determining His Appointments?

BY REV. J. W. ADAMS.

That many Methodist preachers, justifiably or unjustifiably, do endeavor to determine their appointments, will not be denied. That in some cases it is a delicate and even questionable thing to do, is inferred from the fact that so few of us plead guilty of the transaction.

The phrase, "how far," implies that under certain circumstances, and to a certain extent, a preacher is justified in determining his field of labor. That we are disposed to discuss the matter soberly, indicates that there is much of conscience left, as well as of honor and loyalty. The question may imply that liberty in this direction is a privilege; but it may also imply that we have a conscientious purpose not to transcend the limits of propriety.

First of all, it may be well to see what the discipline has to say of this matter. The law in the case may be found in §71, clause 3, which reads as follows: "The General Conference shall not change nor alter any part or rule of our government, so as to do away episcopacy, nor destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency; and §164, clause 3, which says of the duties of Bishops: "To fix the appointments of the preachers," etc.

These enactments, as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, put the appointing power, now and forever, into the hands of our general superintendents. By this it appears that a Methodist preacher has no legal justification in determining his appointment. The law is not in the hands of the man to be appointed, but he is in the hands of the law.

This is the law. But it is the bald, the extreme and the arbitrary view of it; and could no other view be had, it would be a very repulsive one. But the responsible administrators of this law are our brethren whom we have chosen, and to whom we voluntarily refer these very questions. They have judgments, supposed to be influenced by the facts in each case. They have piety, which is supposed to seek the glory of God and the best interests of the church. They are parts of a great sensitive, sympathetic organism, with whose interests they are identified, and whose greatest success it is supposed to be their pleasure to promote. This grim skeleton of law, whose grip is strong enough to take us up when it will, and to put us down where it will, is covered with human, yes, with a brother's warm flesh and blood. Beneath this dome of power is a great brain that wrestles as best it can with its tremendous responsibilities, that it may present the best results which its finite limitations will permit; and within its ribs of steel is a sympathetic heart that appeals to Infinite Wisdom for guidance, that sets a priceless value on every brother's approval, and that grieves, after it has done its best, that it can do no better than this.

All the reliable and valuable information, coming from the ministry and the churches, and filtered through the discriminating heart and brain of the cabinet, is gratefully received and duly considered. Out of the chaos of perplexing and conflicting interests of pastors and churches, the best possible order must come; and it does come. And, in the nature of the case, these decisions must be final. Since Christ called and sent forth His apostles and disciples, it is the best system the world has ever seen, judged by the richness and the magnitude of its results. To be sure, it is a human system, worked by fallible men. It sometimes blunders and seems oppressive. But there is an unwritten chapter in cabinet work that we hear less about, and are too prone to forget. Oh, the wealth of tender consideration! Oh, the relief from embarrassment, the putting of men on the way to realize the fruition of cherished hopes and plans, rendered possible by this system, and by this alone! By this unique arrangement, special aptitudes find their sphere, and many a brother, scarcely known to the masses, but familiar to the cabinet, becomes a very God-send in meeting the local emergencies of some despairing church. The wide observation of the episcopacy finds in one Conference the compensation of an urgent demand in another, and serves both parties by the transfer.

I have thus spoken of the utilitarian features of the itinerant system—its genius for pastoral adjustment—in order to pave the way for announcing what I believe to be true: That a Methodist preacher, in fullest loyalty to the appointing power, may often be justified, in determining his appointment. In our connectional system each preacher is the common property of the whole church. He may, therefore, with the purest motives, allow his voice to be heard in pulpits where hitherto he has not been known. The church has a right to become acquainted with its own resources. He may respond to communications from churches by expressing his honest convictions and preferences—always subject to the Bishop's decision. He may, with all due respect to the "powers that be," commit to his presiding elder any information concerning any financial embarrassment which might be relieved by a change. If his social relations have taken an unfortunate turn, he may express his desire to be removed. If the educational privileges of a particular station are just what he would prefer for his children, it would be praiseworthy to suggest that if agreeable to the church and the Bishop, he would be pleased to go there. If his health, or that of his family, would be likely to be promoted by a closer proximity to the mountains or the sea, he ought, in justice to himself and his family, to say

so. Presiding elders are usually glad to learn the circumstances and preferences of their preachers; and especially of their real necessities. They can often, even to the advantage of the work, do just what the preachers themselves would desire.

It may be an utterly impossible thing to provide for all the seeming necessities that may exist; and no one will regret this more than the true presiding elder, who values above all price the confidence and esteem of his brethren. But these interviews, in which the preacher unfolds his needs and preferences to his presiding elder, may be conducted with such deference to the judgment of the cabinet and the demands of the wider field which they must consider, that whatever the outcome, the harmony of their relations shall in no way be disturbed.

In settling the question of this essay, much depends upon the spirit by which the preacher is animated, and the methods which he employs. "How far?" implies limitations; and there are limitations, as I have already implied. Let us try and get a clearer view of these limitations.

1. We must be limited by what we owe to the system. We have subscribed to the itinerancy. We are not in this organization so much to be ministered unto, as to minister. The places are not so much for the men, as the men for the places. We are in this association to do its work rather than to luxuriate on its perquisites. The greatest good of the greatest number requires a subordination of individual interests. The central idea of the system is lost sight of, and we may as well abandon the itinerancy altogether, if every man is to dictate his own appointment. To demand a particular appointment, is an assumption not warranted by the law of the church. Twenty others may have as good a right to demand the same. To enter into an unconditional arrangement with a church to become its pastor, is a serious breach of courtesy to one's presiding elder. If such an appointment is not ratified by the Bishop, it may rend the church and annoy and cripple the man who is appointed. If it is ratified, it directly tends to the cultivation of disloyalty in the ministry and the churches; and it may be an injustice to that minister's equals, who for conscience' sake remain loyal.

There should be no competition of this kind, or it should be for all. To bring about these results through cliques or rings, is equally reprehensible. No man has a right, having recognized the legitimacy of an Annual Conference cabinet, to usurp its authority and complicate its work. All other things being equal, the man who exhibits such a spirit is the less worthy man, and therefore the less competent, and ought to be restrained and rebuked.

2. We must be limited by what we owe to our brethren. If one hundred men subscribe to the Methodist plan of stationing preachers, and all but five of them submit to it in good faith, all the promotions that these five secure as the direct result of these illegitimate methods, are secured at the expense of some of the loyal ninety-five. That is a spirit of pure selfishness, unworthy of either a layman or a minister. Such a man has an undue regard for "the loaves and fishes," and would ask for himself and his most confidential friend that they might sit, the one on the right hand and the other on the left of the Master in His kingdom. This is taking a mean advantage of those brethren who are too noble to enter into such a scramble. The plea: "They all do it," is not true. And if it were true, the necessity of calling a halt would be all the more apparent. It is intrinsically unmanly, whoever does it. If I have ever been guilty of such practices as these, let my presiding elders arise and publicly rebuke me. It is to the credit of this Conference that it has had so few of such characters, and that in recent years they have grown beautifully less.

Whether we join an Annual Conference, or a base ball club, let us play fair, obey the rules, and not tamper with the umpires.

3. We must be limited by what we owe to ourselves. Self-love is a duty—a praiseworthy excellence. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. But when we drop our neighbor out, and allow our self-love to merge into selfishness, we suffer ourselves. Our neighbor may suffer more thereby, but we shall suffer more. When a minister's ambition for place becomes selfish, absorbing his time and thought, and diverting him from the loftier aims of a true ambassador of Christ, he mars the symmetry of his character, and thus does himself unspeakable harm. When the passion for place becomes predominant, or noticeably apparent, the victim's spirit and methods react upon his moral nature with most damaging effect. To succeed by such means, requires a self-exhibition which obscures the cross and hides and grieves Him who hung thereon. Such a preacher cannot honestly say with Paul: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus our Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." Egotism, always disgusting, is more nauseating in the pulpit than anywhere else. The man who indulges in this, robs himself of genuine self-respect and deprecates the coin of personal character. We always impoverish ourselves when we cultivate the showy elements at the expense of the substantial.

To succeed on this line compels a resort to artifices which rob the ministerial calling of its true dignity, and causes one's good to be evil spoken of. If his craft escapes human detection—which is not probable—he will stand revealed and condemned at the bar of his own conscience and in the presence of the Searcher of hearts. A man cannot reverse the precept, "In honor preferring one another," and not suffer by it. This is a disease which thrives by what it feeds upon. Its possible development is a man whose every public word and act seems to be shaped

with reference to its bearing upon his promotion. This is a pitiable spectacle. We may well recoil from any conscious drift in that direction. Thank God that such characters are so rarely found!

"How far is a Methodist preacher justified in determining his appointments?" He is justified anywhere within the range of motives which are so pure and unselfish that he would be willing that God and all his brethren should read them. He is justified in the use of any means consistent with loyalty to the constitution of his church, with supreme love to God, and with a love to his neighbor equal to that he bears toward himself.

The best advertisement of a minister is a self-forgetfulness which knows "nothing but Christ and Him crucified," and which values success more from promotion. There is always room up higher for those who do the best work. There is never a surfeit of men who have revivals on every charge. The men whose pre-eminent usefulness makes their services indispensable, may safely trust their assignments in the hands of the church and the appointing power. And how infinitely preferable is an unsought promotion to one which has been secured through the artful manipulation of ecclesiastical wires! There may be cases where, for a season, jealous rivals may withhold honor from him to whom it is due, but in the long run men will find their true level, and he who is faithful over a few things, will be made a ruler over many things. Usually the men who are most painfully solicitous concerning their next appointment, and who oftenest bewail their lack of appreciation, are those who do the least to build up the churches they have already served. The surest way for a young minister to win the confidence of the ninety-and-nine in the city, is to evince a Christly compassion in seeking the lost ones in the country. Right here we find an illustration of the text: "Whoever will save his life shall lose it, and whoever will lose his life, for My sake, shall save it." There are ministers who, if they were sufficiently eager to save souls as to forget all about salary and promotion, would gain all these.

There is one place in the Bible which encourages covetousness. The passage exhorts us to "earnestly covet the best gifts," but not the best churches. He who earnestly covets and faithfully uses the best gifts, will seldom be so destitute of appreciation as to have to inquire: "How far is a Methodist preacher justified in determining his appointments?"

Exeter, N. H.

THE METHODIST CALENDAR.

BY REV. J. M. WILLIAMS, PH. D.

The word "calendar" in its ecclesiastical sense has for the past three centuries been under a ban in most Protestant circles. The reason for this was because the Roman Catholic Church, since the Reformation (and, indeed, since as well) had absorbed so many days of the year and dedicated them to her saints. The cause of this Protestant aversion was two-fold: First, and least, because so many saints' days warranted, if not enforcing, idleness upon the part of the people, became a serious hindrance in the industrial world; secondly, because the Protestant mind revolted against the worship accorded these saints, to whom these days had been dedicated by the Catholic Church.

The revolt from the Romish Calendar by the Reformers on the continent of Europe and by the Puritan element in England was far more sweeping than it was on the part of the church organized by Henry VIII of England, popularly known as the English Church, except in the United States where the daughter of the English, is called the Protestant Episcopal Church. Hence our Episcopal friends have had a "calendar" regularly authorized and observed, and varying from the Roman Catholic calendar only in the fact that most of the saints' days have been eliminated.

Time was, and that, too, within the recollection of the now living, when the Christmas festivities and celebrations were discontinued in New England because they were thought to smack of Romanism. Hence Thanksgiving became to New England what Christmas has long been in England and on the Continent of Europe, and also what it was largely in the States of our Union lying outside of New England. While the Thanksgiving still has a strong hold upon New England, that day is, nevertheless, compelled to share some of its former prominence with Christmas. Even the Standing Order, now re-baptized the Congregational Church, favors Christmaseday, and many of her ministers now preach commemorative sermons on the annual return of this "Romish festivity."

So the "middle wall of partition" is being broken down, and the coincidences of Christianity are being extended. A good "spirit" has underlain all these observances, but in the case of some of the churches the "letter" has killed. The trend of Protestantism just now seems to be to preserve the "foundation" while sacrificing the "wood, hay, stubble." That this is the commendable method, hardly admits of argument. The true policy is not to reject the whole of our neighbor's creed because we cannot accept the whole.

The attitude of Methodism towards this whole subject has been somewhat variant. The churchmanship and ecclesiastical statesmanship of John Wesley led him to pattern his entire establishment after that of the English Wesleyanism of to-day to the English Church is, therefore, far more complete than that of the Methodism of the United States. Mr. Wesley contemplated similar conformity in his church in America; but some of his forms

were too cumbersome for the active and less contemplative American mind that was gathered into the fold of American Methodism, and hence they fell into disuse. Doubtless the antipathy of our forefathers towards England during and subsequent to the Revolution, had a larger influence in these matters than is generally believed. With the abolition of the forms, American Methodism swung away from the observance of some of the days of Anglicanism. Hence there grew up, not exactly a conscientious aversion to, but a popular indifference towards, forms, ceremonies and days, that thrust Methodist "service" into a Scottish "barrenness." A reaction is creeping in upon us; and hence Methodist pastors and official boards are arranging in a large number of churches for the "enrichment" of at least the morning service.

With this reaction comes naturally the thought of the observance of certain days. Hence it has become quite customary for at least two days in the year to be formally recognized and celebrated. I refer to Easter Sunday and Christmas. These two days are now observed by us for the same reason that they are observed by the Roman and Episcopal Churches—because upon the one Christ was born, and upon the other He rose from the dead. We now celebrate these days, then, in obedience to what seem to be the fitting demands of our holy religion.

Thanksgiving stands on a somewhat different plane. It is a civil-religious. It finds its origin not in any event or personage directly or indirectly connected with the rise or progress of Christianity; yet Christianity suggests it as eminently in harmony with her teachings. It is the spontaneous outbreathing of the Christian heart for the bounties of the year. But because it had nothing directly connected with Christianity upon which to base its origin and existence, it must needs go to the State for authority. Hence our President and governors appoint the day, and Methodism, in common with other religious bodies, observes it, not because it is religiously binding, but because, from the standpoint of national gratitude, it is religiously befitting.

Thus far the Methodist calendar contains three days, and for the reasons hinted at above. But Methodism does not stop here. Within recent years, by the authority of some of her General Conference officers, she has added two more. Both these have been suggested by those officers who are specifically charged with the duty of providing for the children and youth of our communion. Largely for this reason these days have rapidly risen into popularity; and the first-born of the two has been so judiciously nursed that it now asserts its right to live, and demands the universal recognition of the church. The latest born, though as yet a stranger in many parts of the ecclesiastical household, is nevertheless successfully bidding for universal recognition. I refer to "Children's Day" and "Good Tidings Day." Both these days are fostered with great care and labor, and elaborate programmes or rituals are prepared, the better to ensure their general and successful observance. Hence no days in the year are more popular, or richer in the results directly sought.

Neither of these days had its origin, like Christmas or Easter, in anything immediately connected with the rise of Christianity; nor do they, like Thanksgiving, stand on a religio-civil platform. They belong to the department of church economies. The officers that wrought them out believed that they would bring regularity and add volume to the collections invariably taken upon these days. Upon the number and size of these collections depended the economy of these several departments. Of course the fact that the children and youth of the church would become more interested in matters pertaining to the departments represented, and hence would be more fully instructed and attached to Methodism by these observances, was no small motive in the selection of these days. Still the fact that they would lubricate the financial wheels of the respective departments, and so make it possible to carry forward to the fullest extent the great and commendable work that had been undertaken, was regarded as sufficient given.

The beautiful stereoscopic views of "A Trip round the World," directed by Mrs. Newman, which are so realistic and lifelike, shown for the benefit of the W. F. M. Society, the Ladies' Aid, and for the expenses of badges and prizes in the university archaeological class (taught by Dr. Newman, with great benefit to over two hundred pupils, old and young) realized \$500, which will be equally divided between the three objects above named.

Last night the monthly social was held. The parlors were crowded. Ice cream and cake were served. The ladies of the church made Mrs. Newman a present of \$50, which will, no doubt, go for some grand benevolence. Few women do so much good in all directions as Mrs. Newman.

The Central Mission, commenced three years since on Pennsylvania Avenue, last Saturday moved into enlarged quarters, on the south side of the avenue, nearly opposite the old rooms, No. 909. The new rooms were until recently occupied as a saloon, but now, where whiskey and poison were retailed, souls in numbers are being saved. Daily meetings are held morning and evening and at 3 P. M. The experience of some of the reformed drunkards is indeed very wonderful and touching. To see and hear those battered and wrecked forms of humanity stand up and testify to the power of divine grace to save, would touch the hardest heart. Temperance reform is assured only in and through the cleansing and saving power of the Holy Ghost through faith to the sinful human heart.

The W. C. T. U. has commenced a new department by establishing a life-

saving station in that part of the city where respectable people will not reside, for women who have forfeited claim to decent association. Yesterday the house at 405 Twelfth St. was dedicated to the salvation of lost women. Mrs. W. Burris presided. Mrs. Judge Clark read the Scriptures. Mrs. Westcott presided at the melodeon and led the singing. Dr. Chas. B. Baldwin, Methodist, Dr. Powers of the Christian Church, and Dr. Swan of the Baptist Church, made addresses. Mrs. La Petra, Mrs. Dr. Winslow and Mrs. Davis spoke. Mrs. Cohen, Mrs. Catlin and Mrs. Cunningham led in prayer. The large room was crowded, and many stood in the hall. The rooms are neatly and comfortably fitted up; and day and night, with a light in the window for the erring ones, this refuge will be open, and inside will be found sympathy, food, comfort, Christian teaching, helping hands and loving hearts. The hearts and hands of the people help heartily this good work.

Jan. 4, 1887.

Manchester, N. H.

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON.

BY MRS. LLEWELLYN DEANE.

The closing days of the past year, and the opening day of the new, brought to Washington, as well as to other cities, towns, villages and hamlets, to some seasons of enjoyment, and to others hours of deep grief.

Dec. 26, Gen. John A. Logan passed from earth to heaven. His departure is deeply mourned by people of all classes. None knew him but to love him. His professions and his practice were always one and the same. Some have tried to disparage him by calling him a Democrat. Would that he had many more such Democrats! He believed in a government by the people and for the people, and he always sought to do the largest amount of good to the greatest number of persons.

The pleasant home of Senator and Mrs. Logan was always open to visitors, and the poor as well as the rich at all times received a cordial welcome. The public life of Senator Logan is well known, and justly admired by all true patriots, but it is the purity and beauty of his home life, in the bosom of his family, that is most worthy of admiration and imitation. Few men have lived in Washington so long as Gen. Logan without the tarnish of slander, and few men have served the public so long without some pecuniary gain. Gen. Logan had neither accumulated property, nor had his name been tarnished by improper conduct. He was a Christian warrior, a Christian statesman, and a Christian husband and father.

In my last letter I told you of green grass, blooming flowers, and pleasant breezes kissed by the sunshine. Since then winter has made us a visit. Christmas day was dark, cold and rainy. The first snow of the season fell on the 20th. The streets, houses and parks were robed in a mantle of white several inches thick, and the merry laugh of the riders and the cheery jingle of the sleigh-bells made music on our streets night and day. Then came the rain and the sleet.

In all the Methodist churches watch-night meetings were held, and notwithstanding the bad weather, the attendance was good. The services lasted from 9 P. M. to 12 M. At the Metropolitan Dr. Newman delivered an impressive discourse, recounting the blessings and the sorrows of the dying year, and in earnest words encouraged his people to renewed zeal and effort for the Master during the dawning year.

In many of the churches continued daily meetings have been held, and on last Sunday—communion day—nine united with the Metropolitan M. E. Church, and eighteen with the Union M. E. Church. Mrs. Willing has been holding meetings at Hamline, and several have joined that church. The crowds that throng the Metropolitan M. E. Church test the capacity of that edifice to the utmost. With the chairs, about 1,800 can be seated. Last Sunday the largest number that has ever communed at that altar was noted. Our prayer-meetings are well attended, and are spiritual and full of power. At each meeting an invitation is given to stand up for prayers, which is always responded to by some present. Never before in the history of this church has the power of the Spirit been so wonderfully and constantly manifested. Believers are strengthened and sinners converted.

Then financially the condition is good. On Sunday, the 24th ult., Dr. Newman asked for \$700 to meet the assessment of the Conference for charities. This amount was promptly given.

The beautiful stereoscopic views of "A Trip round the World," directed by Mrs. Newman, which are so realistic and lifelike, shown for the benefit of the W. F. M. Society, the Ladies' Aid, and for the expenses of badges and prizes in the university archaeological class (taught by Dr. Newman, with great benefit to over two hundred pupils, old and young) realized \$500, which will be equally divided between the three objects above named.

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These days? Are we to regard the observance of them as mandatory or advisory? Personally I have observed them in my churches, and have found it excellent policy to do so. But some of my neighbors ignore them. Shall I call them disloyal Methodists? Hardly. The fact is, we are simply drifting in this respect. It is better for us as a church to control these things, and for the General Conference to take some definite action with reference to the course of its officers in this and kindred matters.

Manchester, N. H.

While New Orleans is the great commercial city of the South, and is fast becoming quite an educational centre, it is in no sense whatever a Northern city located in the South. It lacks the push and the energy which characterize most of our Northern towns. But in no American city have greater changes taken place during the past twenty-five years. The old slave warehouses where husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers and young children were kept to be sold at auction or private sale, separately or in lots to suit the purchasers, have disappeared. So now, immortal souls, once bought with blood and anguish by the Son of God, are not sold, leased, mortgaged, or exchanged for land, groceries, or dry goods, to suit the phases of trade or the conditions of the purchaser. The slave trade, and slavery, and disunion are dead. Doubtless there are persons "who do not warm to the flag," who are not much inclined to boast of a country, as they say, "that deprived them of the fruits of their early toil;" but these are yearly becoming less numerous and less outspoken. Most of the people subscribe to the sentiment expressed by Senator Hill, of Georgia: "We are in our father's house, and we are here to stay."

NEW ORLEANS AND THE M. E. CHURCH.

BY REV. L. P. CUSHMAN.

From the same House we have the fifth volume of ALDEN'S CYCLOPEDIA OF UNIVERSAL LITERATURE. 12mo, 50 cents. The present book opens with Mary V. G. Clarke and closes with the death of Moore. The series of the writers are given, and these are followed by selections from their works. The execution of the series is evidently in capable hands, and the work promises to be as useful as it is cheap.

From the same House we have, How TO COOK WELL, by J. Rossie Benton, 12mo, \$1.50. There is no excuse in this age for poorly cooked meals. The guide and receipt books are "legion." The one of the above title is prepared for average families, is thoroughly practical, and meets all the exigencies, as well as ordinary requisitions of domestic life. It will carry the young housekeeper safely and successfully through all the table requirements of her family, and also her formal meals and receptions.

The third volume of HOURS WITH THE BIBLE, by Dr. Cunningham Geikie, issued by B. Alden, of New York, is out. It covers with its comments the Sacred Record from Samson to Solomon. This series forms one of the best of the many aids to the interpretations of the Bible. The books now published embrace the portion of the Scriptures just now forming the themes of the International Lessons. The work is very neatly published in half morocco bindings, and is sold for 60 cents a volume, 45 cents, in cloth.

The same author issues, BROTHER AND LOVER: A Woman's Story, by Eben E. Rexford, 40 cents. Its author's name is familiar to our readers. He has contributed to our columns many short poems, written with much grace and feeling, and exhibiting true poetic talent. The present extended romance in verse is a very pathetic story of the days of the civil war. It is told with real pathos and power, and will readily hold the attention and growing interest of the reader.

G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, issue, CANTATA; or, Song of the Nation's Life, by Walter L. Campbell, 16mo, \$1.00. This is quite an ambitious poem in heroic verse, developing the progress of liberty in the Republic, and pointing out its foes, its struggles and its triumphs. The argument is managed with much skill. It is clothed in free and musical verse, and exhibits much poetic and dramatic talent.

Ginn & Co. issue, in their series of Classics for Children, THE PEASANT AND THE PRINCE; A Story of the French Revolution, by Harriet Martineau. It is finely printed and illustrated, and gives a very vivid picture, which a young reader will readily enjoy, of the opening of the French Revolution, and the tragic story of the young Dauphin.

The same House issues, in a remarkably neat form, THE ROMANESQUE BOOK OF DRUMS, by Sophie Doriot, with numerous illustrations. 12mo, 50 cents. It is a charming introduction to the French language, arranged like our primers in English. It will make the acquisition of the early steps in this study both easy and entertaining.

Lee & Shepard issue THE MONARCH OF DRUMS, by Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Small quarto, 60 cents. This is a remarkable story of Francis Ayrault, of Rhode Island, who had an extraordinary habit of dreaming, which brought him into some quite uncomfortable conditions. It is a peculiar and unique story, told in a very interesting manner.

D. C. Heath & Co. publish AN ELEMENTARY COURSE IN PRACTICAL ZOOLOGY, by Buel P. Colton. 12mo, 50 cents. This is a simple and clear manual for the use of beginners in the study of the use of natural science. It not only introduces the young pupil to the animal world around him, but trains him in habits of observation and attention—one of the chief ends of school discipline.

From the National Temperance Society, New York, we have, AN HOUR WITH MOTHER GOOSE AND HER FELLOW TRAVELERS, and RALLYING SONGS FOR YOUNG TEMPERANCE. The first is 25, and the latter 15 cents. The first is a happy-arranged series of temperance evening entertainments, and the last a collection of spirited songs adapted to juvenile temperance festivals and concerts.

The National School of Oratory of Philadelphia issues two paper-covered manuals, at 30 cents each: HOW TO BECOME A PUBLIC SPEAKER, by William Pittenger—a sensible, well-illustrated and CHOICE DIALOGUES FOR SCHOOL AND SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENTS.

of gain in the Conference acting in harmony with the principles inculcated in the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Sermon on the Mount, and the New Testament idea of the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the oneness of believers in Christ, was nearly double that of the caste Conference.

All of this is a matter of history. To the question: "What is the verdict of the Head of the Church, of the Lord God Almighty, the Father of us all, upon this caste legislation and administration of the Church?" there can be no answer. Tested by the prejudices of men, this legislation and administration seem right; but tested in the light of the Sermon on the Mount and of the judgment day, they have an awful look. It all comes from prejudice—prejudice against the negro because of his previous condition; and in its root and branch it is utterly un-Christian.

Our Book Table.

Mr. John B. Alden, New York, issues a cheap and neat edition, in two duodecimo volumes, with illustrations and maps, of ANCIENT EGYPT, by Prof. George Rawlinson, M. A., Oxford, England. \$1.25 for the set. The work is well known as a highly appreciated. The original edition in this country was published at a cost of \$6.

From the same House we have the fifth volume of ALDEN'S CYCLOPEDIA OF UNIVERSAL LITERATURE. 12mo, 50 cents. The present book opens with Mary V. G. Clarke and closes with the death of Moore. The series of the writers are given, and these are followed by selections from their works. The execution of the series is evidently in capable hands, and the work promises to be as useful as it is cheap.

PERRY'S SAINTS, by James M. Nichols, Boston: D. Lothrop & Co. Price, \$1.25. This interesting volume is a narrative of the fortunes of the 48th New York State Volunteers in the late war. The commander was Col. James H. Perry, a member of the New York East Conference, and a graduate of West Point. The regiment was also known as the "Die for Me" regiment, for the devotion of Perry and his men to duty. The name has been made famous by the remarkably eloquent and popular lecture of Rev. A. J. Palmer, who was a member of the regiment, and who has also written the story of its campaigns. The present volume relates the stirring incidents of camp and field with much spirit, and makes an entertaining and instructive book.

From the same House we have, How TO COOK WELL, by J. Rossie Benton, 12mo, \$1.50. There is no excuse in this age for poorly cooked meals. The guide and receipt books are "legion." The one of the above title is prepared for average families, is thoroughly practical, and meets all the exigencies, as well as ordinary requisitions of domestic life. It will carry the young housekeeper safely and successfully through all the table requirements of her family, and also her formal meals and receptions.

The third volume of HOURS WITH THE BIBLE, by Dr. Cunningham Geikie, issued by B. Alden, of New York, is out. It covers with its comments the Sacred Record from Samson to Solomon. This series forms one of the best of the many aids to the interpretations of the Bible. The books now published embrace the portion of the Scriptures just now forming the themes of the International Lessons. The work is very neatly published in half morocco bindings, and is sold for 60 cents a volume, 45 cents, in cloth.

The same author issues, BROTHER AND LOVER: A Woman's Story, by Eben E. Rexford, 40 cents. Its author's name is familiar to our readers. He has contributed to our columns many short poems, written with much grace and feeling, and exhibiting true poetic talent. The present extended romance in verse is a very pathetic story of the days of the civil war. It is told with real pathos and power, and will readily hold the attention and growing interest of the reader.

G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, issue, CANTATA; or, Song of the Nation's Life, by Walter L. Campbell, 16mo, \$1.00. This is quite an ambitious poem in heroic verse, developing the progress of liberty in the Republic, and pointing out its foes, its struggles and its triumphs. The argument is managed with much skill. It is clothed in free and musical verse, and exhibits much poetic and dramatic talent.

Ginn & Co. issue, in their series of Classics for Children, THE PEASANT AND THE PRINCE; A Story of the French Revolution, by Harriet Martineau. It is finely printed and illustrated, and gives a very vivid picture, which a young reader will readily enjoy, of the opening of the French Revolution, and the tragic story of the young Dauphin.

The same House issues, in a remarkably neat form, THE ROMANESQUE BOOK OF DRUMS, by Sophie Doriot, with numerous illustrations. 12mo, 50 cents. It is a charming introduction to the French language, arranged like our primers in English. It will make the acquisition of the early steps in this study both easy and entertaining.

Lee & Shepard issue THE MONARCH OF DRUMS, by Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Small quarto, 60 cents. This is a remarkable story of Francis Ayrault, of Rhode Island, who had an extraordinary habit of dreaming, which brought him into some quite uncomfortable conditions. It is a peculiar and unique story, told in a very interesting manner.

D. C. Heath & Co. publish AN ELEMENTARY COURSE IN PRACTICAL ZOOLOGY, by Buel P. Colton. 12mo, 50 cents. This is a simple and clear manual for the use of beginners in the study of the use of natural science. It not only introduces the young pupil to the animal world around him, but trains him in habits of observation and attention—one of the chief ends of school discipline.

From the National Temperance Society, New York, we have, AN HOUR WITH MOTHER GOOSE AND HER FELLOW TRAVELERS, and RALLYING SONGS FOR YOUNG TEMPERANCE. The first is 25, and the latter 15 cents. The first is a happy-arranged series of temperance evening entertainments, and the last a collection of spirited songs adapted to juvenile temperance festivals and concerts.

The National School of Oratory of Philadelphia issues two paper-covered manuals, at 30 cents each: HOW TO BECOME A PUBLIC SPEAKER, by William Pittenger—a sensible, well-illustrated and CHOICE DIALOGUES FOR SCHOOL AND SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENTS.

But what the wisest men, guided by the dim light of a purblind philosophy, had failed to find, Jesus Christ revealed. Speaking with divine authority, He told mankind "the Word," which, He said, "is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." This "Word" solves great problems concerning the nature and disposition of God and the moral destiny of men sufficiently to bring them within the

to, to weigh its doctrines in the scales of his own philosophy. When God speaks, it is man's part to listen, to ponder on the meaning of the message, to be as wax is to the seal, as water is to the moving wind. Sitting before it in the docile spirit of a little child, he must invite it to penetrate his inmost nature, to pass from being a perception of his intellect into his conscience as a ray of light, into his affections, his will, his actions and his life. When thus received, it unfolds its innermost meaning, its deepest significance, as it never does, and never will, to an unsubmitive understanding. Its quickening effects on the heart are then felt in the intellect, which now acquires power to "know the doctrine," because the obedience of the heart has transformed the soul into a temple of the "Spirit of truth," who henceforth guides the being He possesses into an understanding of all the truth given to the world by the Lord Jesus. Henceforth the truth becomes self-demonstrative. By cleansing the conscience of guilt, by begetting a love responsive to the love of God, by unbinding the chain which had bound the will to the car of sin, by filling the soul with peace, and by inspiring a perpetual cry for perfect whiteness of soul, it demonstrates the divinity of origin and the authoritative-ness of its claim to be "the truth."

the Central Church, Lowell, has offered himself for Bishop Taylor's mission, and will doubtless be accepted. This is the third from this church, Bro. Hiram Elkins being already in Africa.

ss Helen L. Blackwell, for a time
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of "Strong's Theology." H. T. Blake contributes an appreciative paper upon "Ely's 'Labor Movement.'" Benjamin W. Bacon answers the question, "Is Theology Scien-

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The Family.

THE CHILD.

BY M. E. WINSLOW.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, behold there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem. — MATT. 2:1.

From the far East they came,
Toil-stained and footsore, yet with stately mien.

"Tell us," they asked, "the name
Of him whose beacon star our eyes have seen?"

Long have we followed it across the wild,
Seeking a monarch. Lo! we find a Child.

Versed in all Orient lore,
Adept in horoscopes and reading dreams,
Ever demanding more,

That star has led us to his lambent beams
To find a sage sage serene and mild,
Skilled to decipher mysteries. Lo! a Child.

Thus groped in ages past
Spirits that yearning tread the dim unseen,
Along the devious way

Of mysteries where no guiding star has been,
Searching in vain in ponderous folios piled
For sage and monarch; knowing not the Child.

O Bethlehem! Where the star
Has led true-hearted men whose patient feet
Have crossed the desert far

To find, instead of sage, an infant sweet;
Thrice-forgotten manger, where in weakness
Smiled

Priest, prophet, king in one — a little Child!
To Thee all seeking hearts
Reaching forever out to higher things,
Bring weary the smart

Of baffled soaring with imperfect wings,
To hush their crashing discords fierce and wild
In the soft, gurgling laughter of thy Child.

So in the days to come,
On to the world's millennium yet to be,
Shall aspiration dumb

To human words find utterance in Thee;
The struggling West, the dreaming Orient
Mild,

Find their one point of union in that Child.
Star of the East! We pray,
By thine epiphany guide thou our race
From East or West the way

That leadeth to that cradle-home of grace,
Unto, quite satisfied, across the wild
It kneels before and clasps that Holy Child.

Child of all time! We bring
Our gold and incense, all else flung away,
Tribute to Sage and King

Made manifest in every land to-day,
Rejoicing that on yearning souls hath smiled
God's answer to all questionings — the Child!
Epiphany, 1887.

* Suggested by the Christmas sermon of Rev. Phillips Brooks.

THE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS.

BY REV. C. W. GALLAGHER.

"But these things are written," says the Apostle John, referring to the contents of his Gospel, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

Said Luke, in the preface to his Gospel: "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

From these passages we should naturally suppose that the Gospels were carefully composed by those whose names are connected with them, comparatively soon after the events which they record.

This has been the general belief of the church. In spite of the fact, too, that not a few have come to an entirely opposite conclusion in their confidence in the work of destructive criticism, the brightest scholars in Europe and America hold firmly and confidently to the old belief. They find the Gospels already prepared for the use of the church at the beginning of the second century.

Nothing could have been more favorable to such an early origin of these four books of the New Testament than the literary character of the ages in the midst of which Christianity had its beginning. The art of writing had long been known. The custom of keeping a record of events and of preserving the thoughts of men had been observed from the remotest antiquity. Homer's Iliad, perhaps the most remarkable poem of ancient or modern times, had become old when Christ began His ministry. The philosophy of Plato, the orations of Cicero, the logic and rhetoric of Aristotle and Quintilian, the histories of Herodotus and Livy, the Æneid of Virgil, the morals of Seneca — these and many other histories, poems, philosophies, orations, and discussions on a great variety of subjects, are among the fruits of the literary activity of the ages which lay near the times of Christ. The Jewish nation was in perfect harmony with its western neighbors. Two centuries, and perhaps more, before Christ, the Alexandrian Jews had translated all of the Old Testament from the Hebrew into the Greek. While the apostles were preaching the doctrines of Christ, Josephus was laboriously composing his History of the Jews. The Old Testament itself is a monument to the long-continued attention which the Hebrews paid to the preservation of all matters that were of vital interest to them. There was everything, therefore, in the custom of composing and preserving literary works to favor the possibility of the composition and preservation of the Gospels in the first century of the Christian era.

The facilities for culture, and its encouragement in the best period of the Roman Empire, were such as to add very greatly to this possibility. While the masses of the people possessed little or no education, and were incapable of the work of composition, there was a respectable number who had the requisite knowledge and culture. In fact, just before the coming of Christ, there was very great activity in providing facilities for obtaining knowledge. Schools became quite numerous, and opportunities of education were comparatively common. The dissemination of books grew to be very considerable. Pliny, near the close of the first century, expressed pleasure that his books were sold by booksellers in the remote province of Gaul. Martial, who was contemporary with Pliny, mentions books which cost four or six sesterces apiece, or a trifle more than twenty or thirty cents each. The first public library had been founded nearly or quite a century and a half before the times of either Pliny or Martial. Other public libraries were added from time to time. For two centuries including the life of Christ books were comparatively numerous, education possible, and the art and practice of composition held in high esteem. In view of such conditions, the composition of the Gospels in the first century seems to be altogether natural and probable. It involved no difficulties, and may be regarded as among those reasonable things which men are accustomed to do.

Fortunately testimony has been preserved bearing on the composition of the Gospels. As regards the Gospel of St. Mark, for instance, Papias, an early disciple, gives this account, as given him by the elder John: "This also then was the statement of the elder Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that Peter mentioned, though he did not record in order that which was either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him; but subsequently, as I said, attached himself to Peter, who used to frame his teaching to suit the wants of his hearers, but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed no error, as he wrote down some particulars as he [Peter] narrated them; for he took heed to one thing, to omit nothing of things he heard, and to make no false statements in them."

Irenæus adds also: "After the decease of these [Peter and Paul], Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself also handed down to us in writing the things which were preached by Peter." A similar statement is made with reference to the Gospel of Luke. Irenæus says: "Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel which Paul used to preach."

Eusebius declares that Matthew, when he was about to leave one field of labor for another, wrote out the Gospel for the disciples whom he was about to leave, that in his absence they might have a written Gospel to instruct and comfort them. Important testimony bears witness to the composition of the Gospel of St. John in the latter part of the first century, probably near the beginning of the last quarter of the century. Reliable evidences point to an earlier origin of the other Gospels. There is no good reason to believe that these writings, cherished by the early church, and preserved in their traditions, were other than the four books which we now have. The church fathers of the last half of the second century knew no other reliable and authorized account of the ministry and life of Christ.

The process through which the Gospel narrative passed until it reached the permanent written form in which we now have it, is indicated by a large variety of probable evidence. The wonderful story must have been propagated orally for some years, while the church was still small. Those who were eyewitnesses of the events of the Lord's ministry and listened to His teachings were able to meet the demands of the people who were willing to hear the Gospel. It was more natural for them to speak of what they had seen and heard than to undertake to put it in a written form. They could hardly have written it, while it was so fresh and vivid to their minds. The people on their part must have been more willing to listen to those who had seen the Lord, or to those who had received their information from those who had seen Him. The means upon which we rely for the publication of any unusual event, and the habit of depending upon such means for news, were wanting in that age. Under such circumstances, very nearly the same facts and incidents, and parables would be told by all. In the spread of the Gospel into distant parts, in the death of those who had seen Christ, in a growing conviction of the permanent character of the church and the doctrines of Christ, in the desire to send the Gospel everywhere, were the reasons for reducing the narrative to writing. In the course of time, therefore, the work of writing began. This method of oral teaching, as necessary as it was natural, accounts in part at least for the fragmentary character of the Gospels, for the absence of any strictly chronological order in the narrative, and for the striking differences in the description of the same events and incidents. The written form, composed by those who were of authority and eminence in the church, prevented a natural growth of tradition and speculation, from which the Gospels are beautifully free.

Such is the altogether probable history of the origin of the Gospels as we now possess them. They are not a collection of traditions selected from an exuberant growth of fables and myths, without authority, and unrecognized by the early church. The stamp of apostolic authority is upon them, and they come down to us with the blessing of the second century resting upon them, as an authentic record of the ministry, works and teachings of our Lord.

Men think lightly of sin; but an awakened conscience feels it a burden too heavy to bear. It has made the whole creation to groan. But we see Jesus bearing it in His own body, and His sweat falls as great drops to the ground! What, then, if you should bear it in your own person, O sinner! Why, it will sink thee to the lowest hell. But bear it you must if you reject or neglect Christ, for there remains no more sacrifice for sin. He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son of God hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. — W. Jay.

QUIETNESS AND ASSURANCE.

God works in silence, and His vast designs are brought to pass in quietness and peace; Unrehearsed the sun comes forth at morn; And without tumult on the nation shines; Unseen again his ministrations cease, And twilight worlds are born.

The years sweep onward, but their chariot wheels Vouchsafe no echo to our yearning call; The swift attended seasons as they pass Are shod with silence, and no sound reveals The rapid hours, whose steps are as the fall Of snowflakes on the grass.

In quietness through dreary winter days The buds of next year's summer take their rest, Assured of happy waking by-and-by; Though long the sweetness of the spring days, Though tempests move in wrath from east to west, They neither strive nor cry.

Patient in long reserve of hidden power, God's judgments tarry their appointed time, In silence sweeter than His own eternal calm; While sweet assurance enters realms unseen, Leads onward to the triumph of the blest, The fruit of His rule and the palm!

— Leisure Hour.

IN A SHIRT FACTORY.

BY REV. C. W. WILDER.

More than twenty-five million people in the United States wear shirts. They are not all of the kind known among the soldiers of the late war as "billed shirts," yet they are of some style or quality of the garment to which the word "shirt" can be applied.

The time is not long gone by when the man who wanted a pair of shirts, went to a dry goods store, purchased six yards of cotton cloth, half a yard of linen, a dozen buttons, a roll of tape, and two spools of thread. Then he took this material to his wife — if he was fortunate enough to have one — or to some other woman, who cut and made them for him; she being a dressmaker who could "make a shirt in a day."

Now at any store where men's furnishing goods are kept, a good shirt, ready made, can be bought for but little more than what a yard of cloth cost during the civil war.

Where are all these shirts made? They are not all manufactured in any one place; but if you will come to Leominster, Mass., I will take you where you can hear "the song of a shirt" — not the sad and touching ditty sung by Hood, but a blithe and cheerful song, rattled off by more than two hundred sewing machines, one-third of them real "Singers," over each one of which presides a neat and tidily-dressed lady, most of them young, and all of them cheerful and happy in the consciousness of earning from a dollar to a dollar and fifty cents a day.

First we will go to the basement. Here in a pleasant room are two tables, each forty-two feet in length and a little more than a yard in width. They are made of pine blocks a few inches square, glued together, but set upright, so that the surface of the table is made of the end of the blocks. Here the shirts are cut — not with shears, but with knives. Our grandmothers were satisfied to cut one, or at the most two shirts at a time. What would they have thought could they have cut eight dozen at once? Yet here it is done. Ninety-six thicknesses of cloth, one yard wide and fourteen yards in length, are laid smoothly upon the table. On this pattern made of heavy paper board, with metallic edges, are placed. On this a heavy leaden weight is set, to press the layers of cloth firmly together. The operator, armed with a pointed knife, the edge sharpened to the keenness of a razor, cuts rapidly around the edge of the pattern, and through the ninety-six thicknesses of cloth, thus cutting eight dozen shirts at a time. From four to five thousand yards of cloth are cut up in this room daily.

Every shirt consists of thirty-three different pieces, and each piece is marked with the style and number of the shirt before leaving the cutting room.

Let us now ascend to one of the three sewing-rooms above. Here are seventy-two machines, including four that make button-holes, all running at a speed that would astonish one not accustomed to seeing sewing done by steam power. Each of the seventy-two "girls" has her special work to do, and she does nothing else, though in some cases three or four are doing the same kind of work. One hems them, another sews on the back facings, another the front facings, one gathers the back for the yoke, one sews the parts of the yoke together, one marks the bosom, another sews it on; and thus we might describe all the processes from beginning to end.

Here in the middle of the room sits one "girl," scissors in hand, trimming them, so as to make all the parts of the neck even before sewing on the neck band. Noticing how deftly she handled the shears, I asked, "How many can you trim in a day?" "One hundred dozen," was her reply. "This would be two a minute for ten hours. Her average daily work, however, is probably less than this, as eighty dozen shirts per day is about the product of this room.

From the three sewing-rooms — the other two are precisely like this one — the shirts are taken to the inspector's room. Here every shirt is carefully examined, all the threads trimmed off, any imperfections in the work are rem-

ed, and then it is stamped with a mark indicating its size, and giving the name of the manufacturer, the "Wachusett Shirt Co." They are then folded, tied in bundles of six each, the bundles marked, and packed for shipping in cases averaging forty-five dozen in each.

Up to this point every shirt has passed through thirty-two different hands. A few of the best quality are laundered, and packed in paper boxes containing six each. These pass through the hands of several persons more.

The "Wachusett Shirt Company" is only one — though the largest — of three similar establishments in town. It is now turning out upward of fourteen hundred dozen, or about seventeen thousand shirts every week; or at the rate of about eight hundred and eighty thousand per year. This number, large as it may seem, would furnish only about one in thirty of the shirt wearers in our country with one shirt per annum.

As they manufacture fifteen different styles in thirteen sizes, it would seem that all might be suited.

This one company has increased its production three-fold within a year, and five-fold within eighteen months. They now employ two hundred and sixty hands, but are erecting a new brick factory, which, when completed next spring, will enable them to give employment to from seven to eight hundred persons.

The shirt factories of Leominster now furnish work for about five hundred "girls," and when the new one is completed, will employ twice that number.

SIXTY-TWO.

BY REV. A. B. RUSSELL.

Sixty-two! And backward glancing Into records of the past, And into the future peering, Counting years which number fast, —

Men may pause, and ask the question, "What remains for me to do?" Now descending toward the sunset, At the age of sixty-two.

Twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, Sixty, up to sixty-two; Drops are they from out the ocean, Drops from the eternal blue.

Sixty-two! And down the wintry Side of life descending long, Year by year time's nimble fingers Write new wrinkles on the brow.

Statesmen, poets, men of letters, Science babbles old and new, While the tide of life is ebbing, What remains for you to do?

Men of God in sacred garments, Winning souls to life anew, Have you sheaves from heaven's garner At the age of sixty-two?

There's no time for useless trifling, None for halting by the way, Soon approaching night will finish The activities of day.

Does the soul aspire to purer, Holier service for the Lord, Aided by His Spirit striving, The light beaming from His Word?

Onward! Upward! be your watchwords, Lifted higher by His grace, Till before His throne in glory Is secured a hiding-place.

Men of fifty, men of sixty, Men whose years are sixty-two, Quickly do, and do it wisely, What remains for you to do!

Brookline, N. H.

Our Girls.

THE CALENDAR CLUB.

The holidays were over, and the girls were gathering again at Miss Haviland's school. It was not yet time for the day's work to begin, and a merry group was chatting together about the pleasures the season had brought them, and the presents they had received.

"I suppose we all have calendars," laughed Kate Morris. "My brother Tom gave me a beauty, in a garnet plush frame, but I expect I shall forget to tear off the leaves for a week at a time, and shall date my letters wrong as usual."

"Yes, that was one of my presents," said Bessie Fairlie. "Mine is historical, and tells some important event which happened each day of the year."

"Mine is quotations," said Nellie Platt; "pithy, practical sayings of the wise, or so they have proved thus far."

So they continued. Every girl had received a calendar for 1886 among her gifts. One was a birthday calendar; another gave a poetical gem for each day of the year; another, valuable bits of scientific information, etc., while Bessie Fenton completed the list by saying, "Mine has just Scripture verses, and I learned the one for to-day and have forgotten it already. I expect that is all the good they will do me."

"Oh, well! Who expects to use calendars?" said Josie Darroll. "They are made to sell, and do very well for presents and to hang on the wall, but they don't amount to much in my opinion. We can always find out the day of the month, when we need to know it."

"I don't agree with you," said Bessie. "Just think of the time and thought employed to get them up for this particular year; and we might learn a great deal from them, if we took a little pains to do so."

"Oh, I have an idea!" exclaimed Sallie Davis. "Let's have a 'Calendar Club,' the 'C. C.,' you know. Or, if you like, we could spell it with K's, the 'K. K.' Wouldn't it make a sensation! We'd be taken for a band of Ku Klux!"

"Very fine indeed; but what would this famous club be supposed to do?" inquired Nellie.

"Why, meet every morning half an hour before school, and each member be prepared to give first the day of the month, and then whatever information or selection is furnished by her own calendar. Don't you perceive, ladies?" said Sallie, looking around triumphantly upon the group.

"I like that idea," said Bessie. "Let's try it. It would take very little time and be real interesting. I think. All who are in favor of this proposition will please hold up the right hand."

One after another all the hands went

up, and it was agreed that each girl should come the next morning prepared with her part on the programme. The beginning of the year is a good time for starting new plans with enthusiasm, and the girls took hold heartily of the proposed scheme. The "club" idea is always attractive to school girls, and these were not satisfied without the regular forms of an organized society. Bessie Fairlie was unanimously elected president, and Sallie Davis, secretary. A treasurer was appointed to collect and keep the fines, for it was decided that whenever a member failed to report correctly from her calendar, she must forfeit ten cents. The club consisted of eight members. The first exercise in order was calling the roll, when each in response to her name recited, not only the day of the month, and year, but in regular order came the historical events, prose and poetical quotations, the names of noted persons of whom it was the birthday, scientific facts, etc. Last came the Scripture verse for the day, and this was repeated by each in turn after it had been given by Bessie Fenton.

Naturally, some curiosity was excited among the pupils who were not included in the charmed circle, concerning the "C. C.," as they called themselves. Miss Haviland looked rather grave when the matter came to her ears, for she did not approve of secret societies, but she wisely waited; and when she saw the girls at the library, with eager faces poring over works of history and volumes of poetry — for the scraps which they learned often made them desirous to know more of the subjects mentioned — she concluded that there was good rather than evil in this one, and she would not interfere with it. Soon, too, she thought she noticed that these girls showed greater attention and interest than formerly, during the devotional exercises, which always opened the regular school duties of the day. The connection of this change with the "C. C." remained a mystery to her mind, but it was true that the single Bible promise brought each morning by Bessie, and repeated in turn by all, did impress upon these thoughtless girls minds more strongly than ever before the beauty and worth of those Scriptures which had so often been read in their hearing. When, one morning, Bessie failed for some reason to look at her calendar, and so had no verse to give them, the girls felt that the best part of their exercise was omitted, and some of them, at least, were conscious through the day that they had become a help and strength to them to recall the precious words.

Of all the various clubs of which I have heard among school girls, I think none have been brighter in idea, or the source of more enjoyment and profit, than this "Calendar Club." — MARY CLINTON, in *Congregationalist*.

The Little Folks.

WHEN GRANDPA WAS A LITTLE BOY.

"When Grandpa was a little boy about your age," said he, "To the curly-headed youngster who had climbed upon his knee; 'So studious was he at school, he never failed to pass; And out of three he always stood the second' — But, if no more were in it, you were next to fool, like me!"

"Why, bless you, Grandpa never thought of that before," said he.

"When Grandpa was a little boy about your age," said he, "He very seldom spent his pretty pennies foolishly; No toy or candy store was there for miles and miles about, And with his books straight home he'd go the moment school was out."

"But, if there had been one, you might have spent them all, like me!"

"Why, bless you, Grandpa never thought of that before," said he.

"When Grandpa was a little boy about your age," said he, "He never staid up later than an hour after tea; It wasn't good for little boys at all, his mother said, And so, when it was early, she would march him off to bed."

"But, if she hadn't, maybe you'd have staid up late, like me!"

"Why, bless you, Grandpa never thought of that before," said he.

"When Grandpa was a little boy about your age," said he, "In his bare feet and barefoot and was happy as could be; And all the neighbors round about agreed he was a lad, like me!"

"Who was good as he could be, except when he was bad?"

"But, 'cep'n' going barefoot, you were very much like me!"

"Why, bless you, Grandpa's often thought of that before," said he.

— MALCOLM DOUGLAS, in *St. Nicholas*.

A CHILD'S FAITH.

BY L. N. L.

Little Charlie's life was but a brief span — only three and a half years — and yet that brief life was one of influence and power for Jesus. A sufferer for more than a year from the effects of that dreaded disease, scarlet fever, he was patient, cheerful, sweet and gentle, endearing himself more and more to his devoted parents and friends. It was touching to see his efforts to smile and cheer them with some loving, appreciative word as he noticed their anxiety on account of his suffering.

"Oh, it don't hurt much, dear mamma," he would say, "and I guess we can do it to-day," referring to his ankle one morning when the doctor could not be with them; and as he said this, he put his arms lovingly around her neck while she was striving to keep back the tears.

He had been taught the love of Jesus for little children, and was often found with his favorite little book, containing a picture of the crucifixion of our Saviour, stroking the face most tenderly, and crying at the cruel treatment of "those bad, wicked men." "Dear Jesus," he would say, "I love you, and I'm so sorry."

A few days before his death, while in his bed, too weak to kneel as usual at his mother's knee, repeating his little prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," at its close he lifted himself from the bed, and clasping his little hands, his beautiful face all aglow with smiles and joy, said, "O mamma, I'm so glad for that word 'take,' 'cause when I die I shall go right to heaven." And then giving her a sweet kiss, he lay down never to rise again.

What a confession of faith! What unswerving trust and assurance! Soon after this, Jesus took him into Himself — safe in His arms — and his beautiful form, all that was mortal,

was laid in Greenwood Cemetery. The influence of that brief life still lived in that home; the parents' hearts still yearned for their darling boy, and that they might meet him again — be again reunited; and when, some years after, the father was laid aside from the activities of business by disease, and his attention called to a preparation for the life beyond to which he was daily hastening, he said to the writer: "I want to go where Charlie is, but I am not ready. I am not prepared." He was urged to go to Jesus, in the exercise of the same humble, simple faith of his own little child. He did so, and expressing this with all the fullness of his soul in the beautiful lines of the hymn, "Just as I am without one plea," amid intense bodily suffering and joy filled his soul. So dear was this hymn to him, so precious, that his bereaved wife had the first two verses inscribed on his headstone.

A few moments before his death, after asking his wife to pray, and joining with her, with every faculty clear — no opiates having been given — he raised his eyes, and exclaimed, "Oh, that you could see what I now see! I see Him, Jesus, and I see Charlie too! Oh, that you could see! You cannot, but some time you will." And shortly after he breathed his last. Verily, "A little child shall lead them," and "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Miscellany.

Out of Sorrow, Gladness.

New-made graves and old graves reopened cannot be forgotten, nor is it desirable that they should be. There have been sad partings through the year. To many sickness has come in place of health, others have suffered severe loss of things material, and in other ways hearts have been made sore. May all such remember the goodness of God, for in all and through all He has been at work. Out of sorrow God can bring gladness. The voice of fear may cry out, "All these things are against me!" but faith exclaims, "All things work together for good to them that love God!" With the sad partings let us mingle glad thoughts of happy meetings yet to come. The losses and the crosses of time have in them the elements of present blessing and rich eternal gain. For the Christian heart there is no hopeless sorrow. Tears and trials, griefs and gloom, are letters in the alphabet of Christian experience with which by God's guidance we may spell out most blessed truths. The day will dawn when among our mercies we shall number what now we set down as oppressions. In this faith and hope even the smitten heart may sing, and the substance of that song may well be, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." It is a good thing even for the sorrowing to give thanks unto the Lord. — *New York Observer*.

Goody-goody Literature.

Goody-goody piety is better than no piety at all, and this is the best which can be said of it. But it is not to be admired, and the sort of books which inculcate it ought to be kept out of the hands of our young people. There is growing up a literature which is at once vigorous and devout, and it should be the aim of every publisher, and every Sunday-school official, to put examples of no other kind into the scholars' hands. We have been called to account indignantly more than once for failing to praise a book, the author insisting that, because it told the reader to repent and believe in Jesus, no good man should refuse to commend it heartily. But this is not enough. The appeal must be made sensibly instead of unwisely. It must be made so as to be winsome instead of repulsive, or it is of little value. — *Congregationalist*.

Through Shade and Shine.

Through shade and shine the journey lies Beneath the ever-changing skies. Our finite skill can ne'er divine If one day shall be dark or fine; God hides it from our anxious eyes.

How well for him who daily tries By faith to pierce the clouds' disguise. And sees the Father's glad design, Through shade and shine — Selected.

Wifely Pride.

We had called, Jennie, and I, on a bright young bride, and very bright she was, with sparkling eyes, and laughing lips, and a pretty, girlish way with her, half timid, half defiant, a mixture of girlishness and self-will, that always looks pretty — when you don't see too much of it; then it becomes monotonous. Her husband was not in. We inquired for him, of course; and she answered, with a pretty toss of the head: "He's at that horrid office. I hate it!" When we came away I said, "What a pretty bride Cousin Harry has!" "But I'm sorry for him," said Jennie. "Sorry!" said I, in surprise. "Yes," said Jennie; "I am sorry for any man whose wife has no pride in her husband's business. Sorry for any man whose wife, by her undisguised contempt for what ought to be her husband's pride and ambition, does what she can to make it a drudgery for him. If she looks at his office or his store or his factory as a 'horrid' place, or else only to make money in, what must be the result? Either his joy in it will be dulled and quenched, or he will come to look on her with that pity which is dangerously akin to contempt. If, on the other hand, she has a wifely pride in his law, or his trade, or his theology, or his practice — whatever it may be — he will catch inspiration from her high thoughts about it; and his law will become to him an instrument of justice, and his trade a means of doing good to humanity, and his theology a spiritual elevation everything by her womanly aspiration." And what, said I, "if it be a business that a woman cannot have a pride in?" "Then," said Jennie, "the sooner he leaves it the better; for no man ought to do what a true wife of wealthy citizens, 150,000 persons attempted to join the procession —

Religious Items.

Sir Richard Wallace has given £10,000 toward building a church for Englishmen in Paris.

Miss Chandramukhi Bose, a native Christian lady, has been appointed agent, perintendent of the Bethune School of Calcutta. The *Indian Messenger*, the organ of the Brahmo-Samaj, cordially indorses the appointment.

On Sunday, Dec. 19, Rev. Dr. A. E. Kittredge welcomed seventy persons to the membership of the Madison Avenue Reformed Church in New York, making 125 who have joined in his pastorate at about four months.

The Gospel Banner says that ninety-nine out of every one hundred Unitarians of to-day are

